FY 2004 FGDC Annual Report to OMB

The following outline should be used by FGDC Member Agencies (or Bureaus) for their Annual Spatial Data Reports, which will be consolidated by the FGDC and submitted to OMB. Reports **should be brief, using bullets where possible**. Please provide only the information that will be useful for OMB to assess the agencies' achievements and for establishing future direction.

<u>GENERAL FEDERAL AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES REPORT (All Agencies)</u>

1. *Agency or Bureau*: **USDA** - **Natural Resources Conservation Service**

2. *Name of Contact for Report:*   Email: Phone #:
    Christine Clarke   christine.clarke@usda.gov   301-504-3969

3. *Steering Committee Member:*   Email: Phone #:
    Dr. Mack Gray   mack.gray@usda.gov   202-720-7173
    (NOTE – until12/30/04 replacement yet to be determined)

    Dr. Maurice Mausbach (alternate)   maurice.mausbach@usda.gov   202-690-4616
    (NOTE – until12/30/04 replacement yet to be determined)

4. *Coordination Group Participant(s):*   Email: Phone #:
    Dr. Greg Johnson, Chair   greg.johnson@por.usda.gov   503-273-2424
    (NOTE - until 12/31/04 at which time Phil Pasteris will become Chair, See part B for details)
    Dr. Jeff Goebel, Chair   jeff.goebel@usda.gov   301-504-2341
    Jim Fortner, Chair   jim.fortner@usda.gov   402-437-5755
    Christine Clarke   christine.clarke@usda.gov   301-504-3969

5. *Subcommittee or Working Group Participation (Subcommittees or Working Groups your agency is involved with, but does not lead).*

Subcommittees	**Working Groups**
Base Cartographic Data (inactive)	Biologic Data
Geologic (inactive)	Earth Cover (inactive)
Spatial Water Data	Homeland Security (minimal involvement)
Vegetation	
Wetlands	

6. *Strategy: Has your agency prepared a detailed strategy for integrating geographic information and spatial data activities into your business process - in coordination with the FGDC strategy, pursuant to OMB Circular A-16? If yes, briefly describe.*
    ➢ Yes. To support timely access and appropriate use, the agency has incorporated spatial data into most program management strategies as well as the NRCS *Integrated Information System* which encompasses critical software applications and data distribution.
    ➢ Detailed plans addressing data delivery, system architecture, USDA data standards and GPRA goals have been developed. The combined USDA Service Center Agencies (NRCS, RD, FSA), have developed the *USDA Service Center Agencies GIS Implementation Strategy, 2001.* See http://fgdc.ftw.nrcs.usda.gov/gateways.html

7. *Compliance: How are your spatial data holdings compliant with FGDC Standards? How is your agency involved in Framework Standards development and adoption?*

Also, please list the FGDC Standards you are using or plan to use in your organization.

➢ NRCS uses or partners in data acquisition efforts which use the following endorsed FGDC standards;
   - Content Standard for Digital Geospatial Metadata (version 2.0) FGDC- STD-001-1998
   - Soil Geographic Data Standard, FGDC-STD-006
   - Content Standard for Digital Orthoimagery, FGDC-STD-008-1999

➢ NRCS is implementing the Federal Standard for Delineation of Hydrologic Unit Boundaries. This standard is in the proposal phase and has not yet been endorsed by FGDC. NRCS staff coordinates the data certification process.

➢ USDA/NRCS and the USDA Service Center Agencies have developed standards specific to internal business needs. See http://www.ocio.usda.gov/e_arch/index.html and http://www.itc.nrcs.usda.gov/scdm/docs.htm

➢ NRCS will adopt the framework data content standards where appropriate and continue to collaborate on elevation, orthoimagery and watershed boundary data.

➢ NRCS utilizes other national and international standards where appropriate and USDA is a member of the International Committee for Information Technology Standards.

8. *Performance Measures: Does your agency have performance measures for spatial data activities? If so, please list the measures and target and describe how they contribute to development of the NSDI.*

➢ Yes. Performance measures for "spatial data activities" are woven into performance measures for agency programs. For example, the NRCS Strategic Plan (see http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/about/spa/documents/2000_Strategic_Plan.pdf) identifies *Objective 4.3 – Ensure timely, science-based information and technologies.* Encompassed in this objective are performance targets such as " By 2008, a total of 2,800 soil surveys will be available in digital form, making interpretations of soil survey information easily accessible to our customers, partners, and other users."

➢ The NRCS 2004 Business identifies goals for the acquisition and or development of soil surveys, orthoimagery and elevation datasets specifically. Within the plan several efforts such as Conservation Effects and Assessment Program (CEAP) are noted and rely heavily on spatial data, though those datasets may not be specifically cited in the business plan since their availability is implied.

➢ In response to out-sourcing in NRCS, detailed performance measures have been developed for the delivery of data to agency offices and partners. These measures are focused on one organization unit of the agency and are available upon request.

➢ NRCS is the federal lead for the development of information specific to soil resources. The continued conversion and development of digital soil survey information (tabular and spatial) contributes significantly to the NSDI.

➢ NRCS provides funds and staff for the continued development of digital imagery, elevation data, hydrologic unit data at the national level and a variety of other datasets at the state level. All of which contributes to the NSDI – that is developing an accurate library of public domain geographically accurate data.

9. *Reducing Redundancy of Planned Acquisitions: Do you use the Geospatial One-Stop portal, geodata.gov, to ensure that the data are not already available?*

➢ Yes, NRCS relies upon a variety of communication tools including geodata.gov to determine the availability of existing datasets.

10. *Collection: Do your agency contracts and grants involving data collection include costs for following and using NSDI standards?*

> ➢ No. For the most part, generating data adhering to pre-defined standards is considered part of the data development process and not itemized separately in contracts. Contracts and grants specifically define the quality expectations and as a result the required adherence to standards is documented.
> ➢ In the past, NRCS responded yes to this question. Upon review this year, it was noted that the question specifically asked for "cost for following" standards. Though NRCS makes every effort to document adherence to standards, the contracts do not document the actual cost of doing so. Contracts and agreements state the final product will adhere to a standard and cost estimates are assumed to reflect that fact.

11. *Clearinghouse for Existing Data: Is all the data and/or metadata that your agency is able to share with the public published on the NSDI Clearinghouse? If not, please cite barriers encountered.*
> ➢ No. NRCS generates several program specific datasets that are available from NRCS websites but not discoverable via the Clearinghouse. Under the following circumstances, data may not be discoverable on the clearinghouse - lack of FGDC compliant metadata, localized/project specific data that has not been maintained, data privacy issues and/or inability to provide long-term support for users of data.
> ➢ NRCS, FSA and RD support the delivery of geospatial data to USDA agencies via the Natural Resources Data Gateway. http://datagateway.nrcs.usda.gov This site is linked directly to Geodata.gov
> ➢ Also see response to question #13 below.

12. *Clearinghouse for Planned Investments: Is your agency posting information on planned investments in geospatial information to the Geospatial One-Stop portal to encourage partnerships and leverage investments in the acquisition of geospatial data? If not, please cite when you will begin doing so and what barriers you have encountered that would prevent posting this information.*
> ➢ Yes, where the budget information is available and can be shared with the public.
> ➢ Primary focus is on the national funding initiatives that NRCS participates in such as orthoimagery (NDOP), elevation (NDEP), hydrologic unit boundaries and soils data.
> ➢ Acquisitions of elevation data are shared with NDEP which is linked to geodata.gov.
> ➢ NDOP is working on a similar effort to share information more seamlessly with geodata.gov. NRCS is a member of both NDOP and NDEP.
> ➢ Status of soils data development and watershed boundary data is available via the Natural Resources Data Gateway.

13. *Geodata.gov: If metadata for your agency's geospatial data/information holdings is on a Clearinghouse Node already, has that Node been registered on geodata.gov for scheduled harvesting visits? If not, when is the Node scheduled to begin regular visits by the geodata.gov harvester?*
> ➢ Metadata is currently available on the NRCS node and the NRCS node and Geospatial Data Gateway are registered on goedata.gov but metadata harvesting is not scheduled. The data on the node is dated and NRCS does not wish to have it harvested. We are working with the FGDC/GOS Metadata Coordinator to ensure that the public has access to our most current data while ensuring we support our internal business needs.

14. *E-Gov: How are you using geospatial data in your mission activities to provide better services? (Please list)*
> ➢ NRCS has identified major customer products and services which support E-government activities. Most rely upon or have a geospatial component to facilitate information retrieval and data analysis. The activities support the USDA E-government strategy. See

www.egov.usda.gov for USDA strategy. Examples of NRCS applications supporting E-government:

- Customer Service Toolkit (CST) – conservation planning software tool.
- Resource Data Gateway – single point of access for geospatial information.
- Wetland Determinations Toolkit – supports update and tracking of wetland easement boundaries for restoration and planning.
- Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA) - supports local resource decision making.
- Integrated Accountability System
- Soil Data Viewer

➢ Geospatial data are a critical component of the NRCS Performance Results System (PRMS http://prms.nrcs.usda.gov/prms/index.html) and the Integrated Accountability System http:/ias.sc.egov.usda.gov/ Using these tools, agency leadership is able to refine strategic goals and better align NRCS services to meet customer needs.
➢ NRCS allows internal and external customers to order digital geospatial data via the Internet from http://datagateway.nrcs.usda.gov or access data via the NRCS NSDI clearinghouse node.

15. *Geospatial One-Stop: How is your agency involved in the Geospatial One-Stop?*
➢ NRCS staff person assigned as Agriculture Channel Steward.
➢ An NRCS staff person served as the standards lead for nine months in 2003.
➢ An NRCS staff person supported the integration of GIS into the enterprise architecture model in 2003.
➢ NRCS has provided in excess of 100,000 dollars to the effort.

16. *Enterprise Architecture: Is geospatial data a component of your enterprise architecture? Please provide a brief summary of how geospatial data fits into your enterprise architecture.*
➢ The USDA Service Center Agencies (SCA) maintains shared enterprise architecture. Geospatial data are a key component and driver. The SCA's are implementing a mixed decentralized and centralized architecture to accommodate the need of all three agencies.
➢ The data architecture accommodates the need for geospatial data at all levels of the organizations, local, state and national. At the local and state levels data are being provided to all three agencies and their partners from shared servers using FGDC standard data and metadata in a common file and folder structure. SCA are implementing geodata warehouses for web delivery of geospatial data to local, state and national offices and our customers.
➢ NRCS data is discoverable via links on Goedata.gov.

17. *Partnerships: What efforts are being taken to coordinate data and build partnerships at the field level for data collection and standards development? Identify partnerships and data sharing activities with other federal agencies, state, local, and tribal governments and other entities. Does your agency have any formal agreements or MOU's concerning data sharing and integration?*

➢ NRCS staff are active members of the state geodata consortiums which are critical in leveraging funds to support data development.
➢ Where I-Teams have been formed or are coincident with the state consortiums, NRCS staff participate.
➢ NRCS state level partnerships with other federal agencies, states, local and tribal governments are too numerous to list individually. Examples include, staff sharing

between NRCS, BLM and Forest Service, multi-partner funding for the completion of soil surveys, university partnerships to support digital data development and DOQ development with USGS. State by state detailed information available upon request.

> The National Cooperative Soil Survey (NCSS) is a national, multi partner effort to support the collection, distribution and interpretation of soils information. Details of the partnership and standards process available at: http://www.geoall.net/docs/lessons_from_practice.pdf.

> Yes, NRCS has formal MOUs with various federal, state and local entities to support the one of three primary goals 1) data collection meeting business and programmatic needs, 2) acquisition of a specific theme of data such as elevation 3) acquisition of multiple data sources for defined geographic area. In some cases these three may overlap resulting in high level need. For example, collection of soils information in a flood prone area. This may be of intersest to state and local partners in the geographic area, FEMA (DHS), EPA, and NRCS as a part of its business mission.

> As a member of NDOP, NDEP and other federal coordinating bodies, NRCS has signed the required MOU documents.

18. *Concerns or Lessons Learned: Are there areas or issues regarding spatial data that require attention or lessons learned that you would like to share with others? Please describe.*

> The continued convergence of federal coordinating efforts such as Geospatial One Stop, National Map and FGDC is positive and should greatly increase the strength of the NSDI.

> Enhanced linkages with coordination bodies focused on data production like NDOP and NDEP should be leveraged.

> The Geodata.gov Marketplace may be an opportunity to develop formal partner groups such as NDEP and NDOP to further enhance data development for a specific theme of data.

> During the FGDC Future Directions effort, review of subcommittees and working group charters should focus on defining a clear mission in light of any changes developed in the future direction effort. Would also suggest retiring groups that may have served their chartered purpose.